

# MARCH LG | W3



## Bible Story

Be Humble/Love Your Enemies • *Matthew* 5:38-48

## Conversation Starter

How can you show kindness to someone who makes you mad?

## Bottom Line

Love like Jesus even when it's hard.

## Monthly Memory Verse

*Don't do anything only to get ahead. Don't do it because you are proud. Instead, be humble. Value others more than yourselves.* • *Philippians 2:3 NIV*

5 min

# Large Group Opener

5 min

## OPENER

### What You Need

 Host

1

- Set up the blocks, Play-Doh®, and 2 sheets of aluminum foil on the table.

### OPENER

**HOST:** “Hey, everybody! Welcome back to another week of our series called ‘Upside Down!’ I’m so glad you’re here today. This month, we’re learning something HUGE—that following Jesus doesn’t always look the way the world expects. In fact, sometimes it feels backward ... opposite ... and totally upside down!

“Think about it, there are times when the normal way to act is to get even, get angry, or only be kind to people who are kind to you. But Jesus doesn’t teach the ‘normal’ way. He teaches us a BETTER way ... a way that feels different, surprising, and yes, upside down.

“And today’s game? It’s going to get us thinking in that upside-down, opposite kind of way. Because nothing in this game works the normal way! If you do what you *think* you should do ... you’ll be wrong. If you do the opposite ... you’ll win! Today’s game is called: ‘Get Backwards!’

*SLIDE: Get Backwards! Title*

“All right, here’s how it works. I’m going to give you super simple instructions. Stuff like ‘Sit!’ or ‘Clap!’ or ‘Walk!’ But in this game ... you must NOT do what I say. You have to do the opposite.

“Let me give you an example. If I say, ‘Sit!’ ... you should stand up or stretch tall. If I say, ‘Freeze!’ ... you should move around quickly. If I say, ‘Walk!’... you should stand still. Got it?

“Okay, everybody up on your feet with some space around you. Let’s warm up with a few practice rounds.

*AUDIO: Upbeat music*

### Round 1 (Practice)

“Ready? Clap!

*Watch kids intentionally NOT clap. If needed, reiterate that they’re supposed to do the opposite of what you say.*

“Nice! Now, be angry!

*Watch kids intentionally NOT be angry and instead act happy, sad, etc. If needed, reiterate that they’re supposed to do the opposite of what you say.*

"Perfect! You guys are already getting the hang of it.

### Round 2 (Game Begins)

"Okay, now the challenge begins!

"Sit!

"Walk forward!

"Freeze!

"Shout!

"Whisper!

"Be scared!

"Be tired!

"Stand still!

"Great job, everyone! Okay, now let's try a fast round ...

### Round 3: Lightning Round

"Clap!

"Sit!

"Walk!

"Freeze!

"Be angry!

"Be excited!

"Stand!

"Be sad!

"Whisper!

"Shout!

"Whew! You all did awesome! Give yourselves a round of ... wait, don't clap, give yourselves a round of *opposite applause*! Everyone give baby claps!

*Pause while kids give baby claps.*

"You know, doing everything the opposite way feels weird, right? It feels backwards. It feels upside down. And honestly ... sometimes that's what it feels like when we follow Jesus.

"Jesus teaches us to do things that aren't always easy—things that other people might not expect. And one of the hardest things Jesus tells us to do is to show love to people who aren't kind to us. To choose kindness when someone makes us mad. To respond with love even when it feels like the total opposite of what we want to do.

"That's upside-down love, and it's exactly what we're going to learn about today! Okay, let's take a look at our Bottom Line.

***SLIDE: Bottom Line***

***[Bottom Line]*** "Love like Jesus even when it's hard! Let's say that together, everyone!"

**KIDS AND HOST:** ***[Bottom Line]*** "Love like Jesus even when it's hard!"

**HOST:** "Woohoo! Let's learn what that means!"

11 min

# Worship

3 min

## This is Amazing Grace

### What You Need

No supplies needed

3 min

## Good Good Father

### What You Need

No supplies needed

5 min

## Memory Verse

### What You Need

No supplies needed

"Give it up for yourselves — that was awesome!

This month we're discovering that following Jesus sometimes flips our thinking upside down. Instead of trying to be the greatest, we learn to be humble. Instead of thinking only about ourselves, we trust God's way.

And the reason we can live that way is because of what Jesus has done for us. He stepped in. He rescued us. He changed everything.

So let's start by singing about His amazing grace — the grace that turns our lives right side up."

"That's what I'm talking about! Jesus really does set us free!

But here's the best part — the King we just sang about? The powerful one who rules over everything? He's also a loving Father.

He's not distant. He's not harsh. He's good. He cares about you personally.

So as we sing this next song, think about that — the God who has all authority is also your Good Father."

"Great job, everyone! I love worshipping God with you all! Here's what we can remember today, worship doesn't stop here. You can keep worshipping God this week by the way you live, the way you treat people, and the way you trust Him. You can keep worshipping God all through the week!

"Now, let's take a look at our Memory Verse for this month. It's one of my favorites because it reminds us how to live *Upside Down*, the way Jesus wants us to live."

"Let's break it down so we can understand it better, and then we'll all say it together!

*SLIDE: Memory Verse*

*Don't do anything only to get ahead.* That means, don't just think about yourself.

*Don't do it because you are proud.* That means, don't brag or try to look better than someone else.

*Instead, be humble.* 'Humble' means putting others first.

*Value others more than yourselves.* That means treating people like they matter ... because they *do!*

"Now, let's say it together, nice and loud!"

**WORSHIP LEADER:** *"Don't do anything only to get ahead."*

**KIDS AND WORSHIP LEADER:** *"Don't do anything only to get ahead."*

**WORSHIP LEADER:** *"Don't do it because you are proud."*

**KIDS AND WORSHIP LEADER:** *"Don't do it because you are proud."*

**WORSHIP LEADER:** *"Instead, be humble."*

**KIDS AND WORSHIP LEADER:** *"Instead, be humble."*

**WORSHIP LEADER:** *"Value others more than yourselves."*

**KIDS AND WORSHIP LEADER:** *"Value others more than yourselves."*

**WORSHIP LEADER:** "Philippians 2:3!"

**KIDS AND WORSHIP LEADER:** "Philippians 2:3!"

"Awesome job! You just said the Memory Verse like pros! This verse reminds us to put others before ourselves. We can start with even the small things, like sharing a toy or asking if you can help someone clean. Ask God this week to help you be humble and value others this week! That's what living *Upside Down* looks like!"

38 min

# Bible Story (Live)

3 min

## INTRODUCTION

### What You Need

 Storyteller	1
 Host	1
 Bible	1
 Table	1
 Adult volunteers	2

*Note: We're so excited to be going through key stories of the Bible this year and learning more about its Author—God! It's God's Big Story! But to provide you with flexibility as you experience God's Big Story in your own unique setting, there's more than one way to use the following script!*

*If you want to follow "God's Big Story," read the following script straight through. Each week will build on the previous ones. But, if your church wants to teach a Large Group session without connecting it to what has come before, there are two sections in the script below that are optional—"God's Big Story Opener" and "God's Big Story Closer." (Or if you are joining us at some point throughout the year, you can opt out of the God's Big Story part and just join us as we journey through the rest of the story of Scripture!) We're going to go through the Bible as we teach throughout the year, but whether or not you share God's Big Story each week is up to you!*

*Whatever way you decide to use the following, know that we're praying diligently for you—we're asking God to help kids see and believe that He loves them, He invented them, and He wants to be their closest Friend. Forever. It's an honor to get to know God with you through the Bible this year!*

*Make sure a table is set on stage so the Storyteller can place their Bible on it and read from it. Put the two bowls (one filled with cotton balls), the spoon, the small whiteboard, the dry-erase marker, the dry-erase eraser, the paper, and the scissors on the table too!*

**STORYTELLER:** "Hi, friends! I'm really glad you're here today, because we're learning something incredibly important about the upside-down way Jesus teaches us to live. That's what our series is called this month—'Upside Down!'"

"When Jesus came to Earth, He didn't just tell people to be nice; He taught a whole new way of treating others that shocked everyone who heard it.

"One day, Jesus went up on a mountainside and a huge crowd of people tuned in to listen. What He said sounded completely different from the way people were used to living. He talked about humility, kindness, and loving others ... even people who were difficult to love."

"Today we're going to look at one part of that teaching where Jesus explained what it means to love like Him, even when it's hard. And friends, this is a teaching that flips everything upside down."

"Our Bottom Line today is: **[Bottom Line] Love like Jesus even when it's hard.** And by the time we finish this story, you'll see exactly what Jesus meant.

"But before we get into that teaching from Jesus, let me tell you about something amazing we're doing this year!"

5 min

## GOD'S BIG STORY OPENER (OPTIONAL)

### What You Need

No supplies needed

"We're going through the key stories of the Bible! By the end of the school year, we'll have looked at the key stories of the Bible from cover to cover!

"Why are we doing that? Well, part of the reason God gave us the Bible is so we could know Him! He wants to be our close, close friend. So as we go through the Bible this year, our hope is to learn more about God!"

**STORYTELLER:** "We're going to go through God's Big Story in the Bible together so we can learn about God! (*Gesture to slide.*)

*SLIDE: God's Big Story*

"Let me catch you up on where we've been in God's Big Story so far!

"You might remember that, in the beginning, God created everything. He made the world, the animals, people ... everything! God made the first people for the same reason He made all people—to be His close, close friends. But sadly, the first people God made chose to turn away from Him and sin. God wanted people to be close to Him, but they couldn't anymore. Pain, sickness, and death entered the world too.

"But God didn't want to leave things that way. So He put His rescue plan in motion right from the start!

"God was going to rescue everything through a family! God chose a man named Abraham and promised that his family would bless the whole world. Abraham had a great-grandson named Joseph, who became a leader in Egypt and saved his family—God's people. Over time, God's people grew but were enslaved by a new Pharaoh. 'Help us!' they cried out to God. God freed His people and brought them to the super-nice home He had designed for them, the Promised Land.

"Some time after God's people were settled in the Promised Land, they asked for a king like the other nations around them. God gave them a king, and then many more kings (and one queen) followed. Sadly, after a long time of turning away from Him, God allowed His nation to be split in two—into the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah. Prophets spoke for God saying, 'Come back to Me!' But the northern kingdom of Israel was destroyed, and the southern kingdom of Judah was taken captive. Oh no! After years in exile, some of God's people returned to rebuild their homeland, while others stayed in foreign lands.

"During that sad time, God kept sending messages to His people about the Rescuer He had promised long ago. 'God's Rescuer is going to come like this!' the prophets said. But for years and years, nothing happened.

"And then it did! God sent Jesus, the Rescuer we needed, just like He promised! While Jesus was on Earth, He showed us who God is because He is God!

"And that's where we are in God's Big Story!"

5 min

## SETTING UP THE STORY

### What You Need

No supplies needed

5 min

## A NEW WAY TO RESPOND

**STORYTELLER:** "Today we're continuing our journey through the Bible! We're at the part of the Bible where Jesus was on Earth. And we're going to look at an important truth He taught while He was on a mountainside.

"But before we look at what Jesus taught on the mountainside, I want to show you something. I've got a few everyday items here and specifically, some tools I use with them—a spoon, a dry-erase marker, a pair of scissors. Nothing fancy."

*Hold up the tools (the spoon, the dry-erase marker, and the pair of scissors) and show them to the kids. Change the following text depending if you're right or left-handed.*

"Now, usually, I use my right hand when I use these kinds of things. But today, I'm going to use my LEFT hand. And let me tell you ... this is going to feel weird."

*Using the spoon, try to scoop a cotton ball with your non-dominant hand from the full bowl to the empty bowl. Make it a little funny and over the top.*

"Whoa ... okay ... this already feels strange. My hand doesn't know what it's doing!"

*Use the dry-erase marker to write your name or draw a simple shape on the small whiteboard, and show it to the kids.*

"Look at this! I promise I'm trying ... but it doesn't look anything like what I normally write!"

*Use the scissors and cut a simple straight line on a piece of paper, showing effort.*

"This is way harder than I expected. You know what? Doing these things with the wrong hand feels uncomfortable, awkward, and honestly kind of frustrating. It doesn't come naturally at all. And that's exactly what it can feel like to love someone who's hard to love. It doesn't feel smooth. It doesn't feel easy. It feels... off. Like you're using the wrong hand.

"But here's something cool: when you practice something uncomfortable, you get better at it. You build new muscles. And when you practice loving people who aren't easy to love, you slowly start learning how to love like Jesus.

"That's what today's upside-down lesson is all about. Jesus taught us a way of living that doesn't always feel natural at first ... but it grows us into people who love like He does. Let's take a look at what Jesus taught that surprised everyone listening."

**STORYTELLER:** "After sitting down on the mountainside, Jesus began teaching His followers about what life in God's Kingdom is really like. A bunch of people tuned in to listen. And right away, He said something that sounded totally upside down to everyone listening.

**What You Need**

No supplies needed

5 min

**LOVE THAT LOOKS DIFFERENT****What You Need**

No supplies needed

"Back then, people followed a rule that was basically this: *'If someone hurts you, you hurt them back the same way.'* That was the normal way. The expected way.

"BUT Jesus came to teach a new way, a better way. This is what He said: *Open the Bible to Matthew 5:38-42 (NIRV) and read.*

*"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye must be put out for an eye. A tooth must be knocked out for a tooth.' But here is what I tell you. Do not fight against an evil person. Suppose someone slaps you on your right cheek. Turn your other cheek to them also. Suppose someone takes you to court to get your shirt. Let them have your coat also. Suppose someone forces you to go one mile. Go two miles with them. Give to the one who asks you for something. Don't turn away from the one who wants to borrow something from you."*

"Can you imagine how surprising that sounded? Instead of just getting even or protecting yourself, Jesus was saying you could choose something else ... you could choose kindness. You could choose patience. You could choose love, even when the other person was unkind first.

"It's kind of like that 'wrong hand' feeling. The moment someone is mean to you, your *natural* reaction might be to snap back or get even. But Jesus showed us an upside-down way of responding, a way that feels different, awkward, and hard at first ... but grows something strong inside us.

"And that's the kind of love Jesus wanted His followers to learn, not love that waits for kindness first, but love that chooses kindness *even when it's hard.*

**STORYTELLER:** "Then Jesus taught something that probably surprised people even more. He said there's a difference between the kind of love everyone already knows ... and the kind of love God shows.

*Open the Bible to Matthew 5:43-45 (NIRV) and read.*

*"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor. Hate your enemy.' But here is what I tell you. Love your enemies. Pray for those who hurt you. Then you will be children of your Father who is in heaven. He causes his sun to shine on evil people and good people. He sends rain on those who do right and those who don't."*

"Jesus was saying, 'You've heard the old way, love the people who love you back, and ignore or hate the people who don't.' That was normal. That was expected.

"But Jesus said something upside down: 'Love your enemies.' Not 'be nice only to your friends.' Not 'wait until they change.' Not even 'ignore them.' No, Jesus said, *'love them.'* Pray for them. Care about them. Show kindness even when they don't deserve it.

*Use the dry-erase eraser and erase the small whiteboard. Then use the dry-erase marker to write your name again on the whiteboard with your non-dominant hand. Struggle as you do it, and show the kids the result.*

"Using this hand is hard to do. Sometimes loving someone who hurts your feelings or makes you mad feels just like that—uncomfortable and

5 min

## LOVING LIKE JESUS

### What You Need

No supplies needed

5 min

## WRAPPING UP THE STORY

### What You Need

No supplies needed

definitely not natural. But the more we practice it, the more we learn to love like Jesus.

"And then Jesus gave us this amazing picture: God sends sunshine and rain to everyone, the kind people and the unkind people. He shows love to all people.

"That's the kind of love Jesus wants His followers to show. A love that doesn't wait until someone is easy to love. A love that doesn't disappear when things get hard. A love that looks just like God's love for us.

**STORYTELLER:** "Jesus wasn't done yet. He wanted His followers to really understand how upside down His way of loving is.

*Open the Bible to Matthew 5:46-48 (NirV) and read.*

*"If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Even the tax collectors do that. If you greet only your own people, what more are you doing than others? Even people who are ungodly do that. So be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect."*

"Jesus was saying, 'Anybody can love people who are nice to them.' That doesn't take work. That doesn't take courage. That doesn't take strength.

"But loving people who *aren't* nice to you? Being kind when someone hurts your feelings? Showing patience when someone is frustrating?"

"That takes the kind of love that Jesus gives.

*Point gently to the items that you used your opposite hand on.*

"And just like using your non-dominant hand feels awkward at first, loving people when it's hard feels the same way. It doesn't come naturally. It feels like you're doing something opposite.

"But even though loving people who hurt you is so hard, you don't have to do it on your own! When you become a follower of Jesus, the Holy Spirit, who loves His enemies, comes to live inside of you. Ask for His help! He will help you!"

**STORYTELLER:** "Jesus showed us a totally upside-down way to live, a way that doesn't wait for people to be nice first, but chooses love even when it's hard. Just like practicing something that feels awkward at first makes you stronger, choosing kindness when someone frustrates you is actually obedience to Jesus. And every time we choose that upside-down kind of love, we look a little more like Him.

*SLIDE: Bottom Line*

**[Bottom Line]** "Love like Jesus even when it's hard. Say that with me."

*Host enters and joins in.*

5 min

## GOD'S BIG STORY CLOSER (OPTIONAL)

### What You Need

No supplies needed

**KIDS, STORYTELLER, AND HOST:** *[Bottom Line]* "Love like Jesus even when it's hard."

**HOST:** "Let's take a look at the progress we made in God's Big Story this week!"

*SLIDE: God's Big Story*

"This week, we're up here in the part of this picture of God's Big Story—the picture that says, 'Jesus' Life.' Jesus Himself came to teach us about who God is!

"This week we learned a hard, hard truth that Jesus taught. Jesus taught us that when someone hurts us, we are to show them love back. But Jesus wasn't teaching us something that He didn't live out. In fact, He lived it out on the biggest scale ever. We had so many sins, and sins grieve God. Not only that, but all people for all time had sinned and grieved God. But on the cross, even though Jesus had lived a perfect life, Jesus took on all of that sin, and paid for it. Jesus said, 'Forgiven!' It is the ultimate power when love defeats sin, and that's exactly what Jesus did, for all of us.

*SLIDE: Week 3 Timeline Image*

*If you're making a timeline of printed images on your wall, take this moment to place today's Timeline Image on the clothesline.*

"And this week, we learned how Jesus taught us that we should love our enemies!"

8 min

# Closing

5 min

## WHAT'S OUR PART IN THE STORY?

### What You Need

No supplies needed

3 min

## PRAYER

### What You Need

No supplies needed

**HOST:** "So, what's our part in the story? Well, Jesus showed us that love isn't just for the people who treat us kindly. Real, upside-down love means choosing to be kind even when someone frustrates us or hurts our feelings. And that's not something we can do on our own. We need God's help.

"When someone is hard to love, we can pause and talk to God. We can ask Him to give us patience instead of anger. We don't have to show His love on our own! When we began following Jesus, His very Spirit, the Holy Spirit, came to live inside of us. He shows love to His enemies, so He can help us do that too!

"And then, we can do what we can do to show God's love. We can choose to say something kind instead of something mean. We can pray for people who upset us.

"When people see you choosing to love when it's hard, they'll know that you're different. They'll feel the power of what you're doing—you're pouring out love in response to hurt—and they'll see that you're a follower of Jesus.

"Loving people you don't get along with is tough. But it's one of the most powerful ways that you can live like Jesus. And He will help you as you try!"

**STORYTELLER or HOST:** "Let's talk to the God who will help us live in this upside-down way!

"God, thank You for loving us with a love that never gives up. Sometimes it's really hard to show love to people who hurt our feelings or make us mad. But You understand that, and You promise to help us. Please give us the strength to choose kindness, to be patient, and to love like You even when it's hard. Help our hearts grow stronger as we follow You. We love You, God. Amen."

*AUDIO: Play high-energy music as the kids exit.*

*SLIDE: Theme*

# Supplies

OPENER		Quantity	INTRODUCTION		Quantity
1.	Host	1	1.	Storyteller	1
			2.	Host	1
			3.	Bible	1
			4.	Table	1
			5.	Adult volunteers	2